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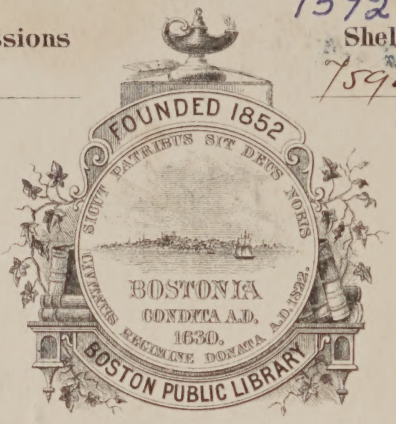

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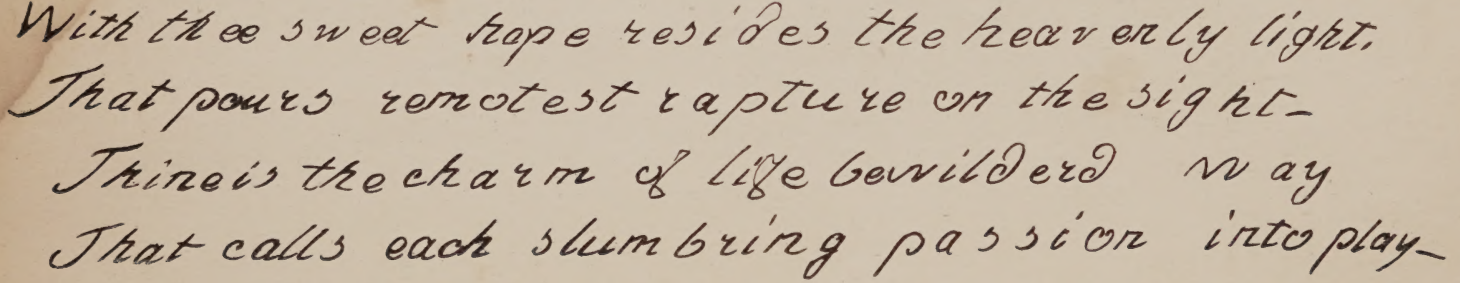
Received Sept. 16. 1877

Heliotype Printing Co.

Fac-Simile of the Hand-writing of Mr. Trencheri;
Blind Teacher, at the New-England Institution for the Blind.


With thee sweet hope resides the heavenly light.
That pours remotest rapture on the sight—
Thine is the charm of life bewildered way
That calls each slumbring passion into play—

Pendleton's Lithog.ʸ Boston.

OFFICERS

OF THE

NEW ENGLAND

ASYLUM FOR THE BLIND.

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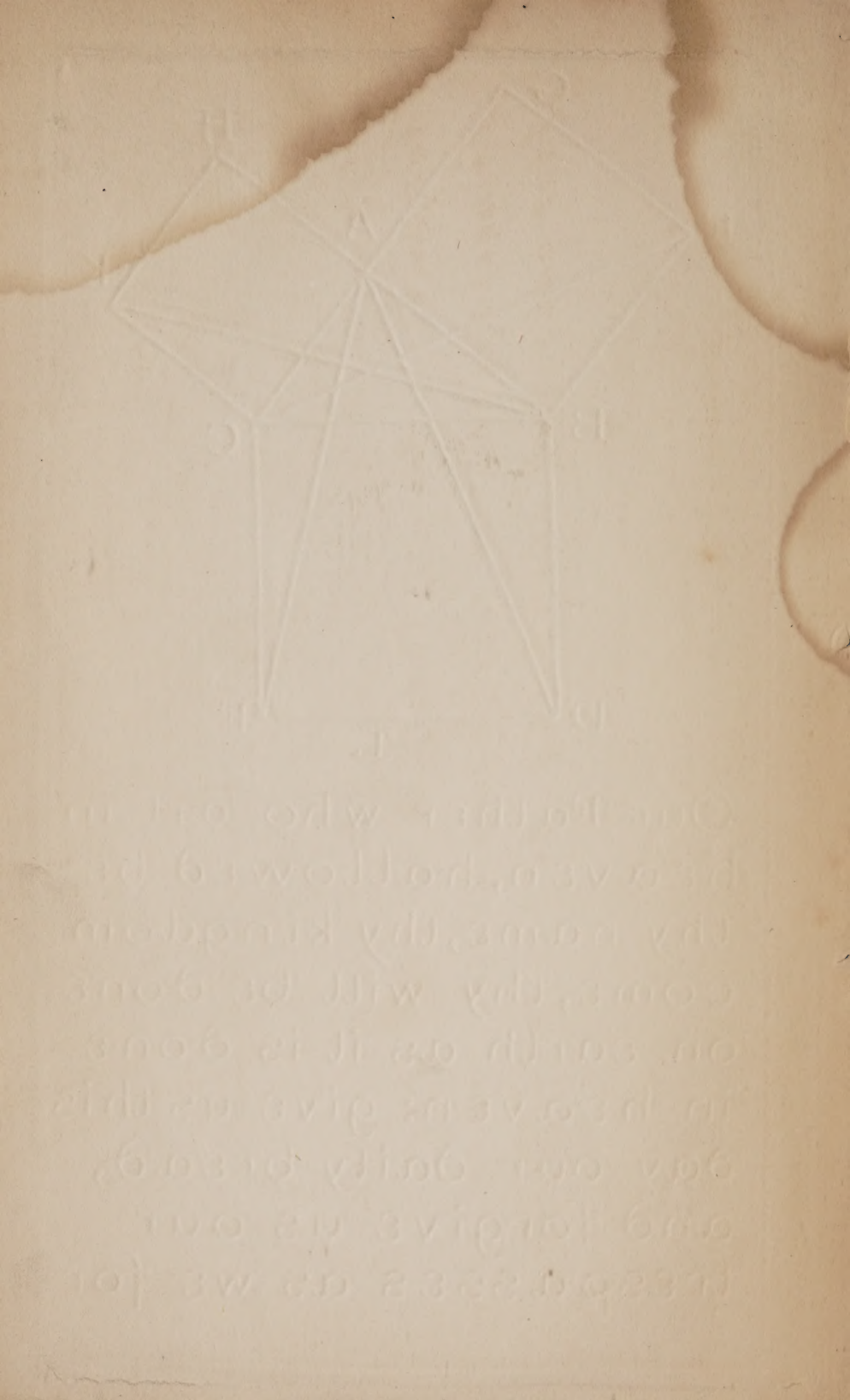
L.

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven: give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we for



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ADDRESS

OF

THE TRUSTEES

OF THE

NEW-ENGLAND INSTITUTION

FOR THE

EDUCATION OF THE BLIND

TO

THE PUBLIC.

Boston:
DUTTON AND WENTWORTH, STATE PRINTERS.

1833.

(26)

HOUSE..... .....No. 25.

[Reprinted by order of the House of Representatives, February 4, 1833.]

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Boston:
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1833.

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Sept. 16, 1877

TO THE PUBLIC.

It is four years since an Act incorporating the Trustees of the New England Asylum for the Blind, was passed by the Legislature of Massachusetts. Why so much delay has occurred in commencing operations, will be duly explained.

The Trustees have now the satisfaction of announcing, that their institution has been in actual operation for five months; and that their most sanguine expectations of the capacity of the blind for receiving an education, have been fully verified in the progress of the interesting beings under their charge. But before giving any account of the state of their Institution, the Trustees beg leave to make some general remarks on the blind; on the light in which they have been held, and the manner in which they have always been treated by their fellow-men.

Blindness has been in all ages one of those instruments by which a mysterious providence has chosen to afflict man; or rather it has not seen fit to extend the blessing of sight to every member of the human family. In every

low-blind the means of earning their own livelihood, or at least of doing much towards it; you may light the lamp of knowledge within them, you may enable them to read the Scriptures themselves,

> 'And thus, upon the eye-balls of the blind,
> To pour celestial day.'

All this you can do by the establishment of institutions for their education; and it is to demonstrate this fact, that this Circular is addressed to you. The Trustees do not ask assistance for the Institution alone, but they call upon the public to consider the situation of the blind every where, and every where to extend to them those benefits, which are greater than the most liberal alms that can be bestowed.

This is not a common call, nor is it a common case; for the object proposed, differs materially from most charitable establishments; first, in that there is no possibility of deception, since no one can doubt or deny the claim which the blind have upon the charity of their more fortunate fellows; and second, that the object is an economical one to the community. It is to take from society, so many *dead weights*, that it is proposed to educate the blind, and enable them to get their own livelihood: and society ought to consider any capital so invested as a *sinking fund* for the redemption of its *charitable debt;* as a provision for preventing the blind from becoming taxes to the community. In proof of this the Trustees would try to draw the attention of the public to the different kinds of work which are performed by the blind in the different institutions in Europe: some of which may also be seen at the infant institution under their direction.

That a blind man may become a first-rate professor of music, frequent example has taught every one; it remains however for many to be convinced, that a blind man may become a good teacher of mathematics, the languages, and almost any science; that he may gain a decent livelihood by the labor of his hands in the fabrication of baskets, mats, mattresses, twine, &c. &c. To do these things, he needs only an apprenticeship in an establishment devoted entirely to this purpose, and pursuing a peculiar plan of education adapted to his wants; and it is in aid of their efforts to establish such an institution, that the Trustees call upon their fellow-citizens for encouragement and support.

It is alike the character and honor of our age, that society is not content with administering charitable aid to the distressed, but that it seeks to strike at the root of the evil, and prevent its recurrence; it remains yet for our country to apply this principle to the pauperism of the blind. It is not now the time to discuss the direct and indirect tendency of blindness to produce pauperism; suffice it to say the blind are generally paupers: they have always been so, and the place to seek the blind, has always been at the way-side begging for alms. Nothing was done for their education until about forty years ago, when the humane Abbé Hauy undertook to educate some blind children in his own house, and his success was so great, that the Government of France employed him to establish an institution in Paris. This he did, and it became so interesting an object that he was called by the Emperor of Russia to St. Petersburg for a similar purpose; and after successfully putting his system into operation there, he laid the foundation of a school for the blind at Berlin. He invented the method

of printing in raised characters, made tangible and sensible to the blind; he also constructed maps, musical notes, &c. but left the subject in a very imperfect state at his death.

Similar institutions have been since founded, and are in successful operation in Amsterdam, Vienna, Dresden, London, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Liverpool and other places; the condition and operation of which have been thus noticed in a Report made to the Trustees by Dr. S. G. Howe.

'The European institutions for the education of the blind may be divided into two classes; those established and supported by the Governments, and those which owe their foundation and support to the charitable efforts of individuals; the latter are by far more useful than the former.

'There can be no more delightful spectacle than is presented by these establishments, where you may see a hundred young blind persons, changed from listless, inactive, helpless beings,—into intelligent, active, and happy ones; they run about, and pursue their different kinds of work with eager industry and surprising success: when engaged in intellectual pursuits, the awakened mind is painted in their intelligent countenances; and when the whole unite in sacred music, there is a display of deep felt interest, of fervid zeal, and animating enthusiasm, which I have never seen equalled.

'The proposed end of these different institutions is to give to the blind the means of supporting themselves; and this is effected with different degrees of success.

'I visited all the principal institutions for the education of the blind in Europe, and found in all much to admire and to copy, but much also to avoid.

'Those institutions, which are founded and supported by the Government, labor under many disadvantages necessarily attendant upon such a connexion; and it may be said without injustice to the persons employed, that they are obliged to follow such a system, and make such exhibitions, as will redound rather to the glory of the State than the good of the pupils. Hence so much of useless parade and show—hence so much time and patience spent upon learning to perform surprising but useless things. Those on the other hand, which are kept up by individual effort and public benevolence, fall into the error of considering their pupils too much as objects of charity, and of petting and caressing them too much.

'The Institution for the Education of the Blind at Paris, as it is the oldest, and as there is about it more of show and parade than any other in Europe, has also the reputation of being the best; but if one judges the tree by its fruit, and not by its flowers and foliage, this will not be his conclusion.

'Its founder and the great benefactor of the Blind, the Abbé Hauy, invented and put into practice many contrivances for the education of the blind; and otherwise rendered the institution excellent for the age, and the time it had existed; but as he left it so it has since remained. It receives, supports and educates about a hundred blind youth; and there being no other in France, it follows that there are only one in 300 of their blind who receive an education. The great fault in the Parisian Institution, is the diversity of employment to which the pupils are put; and the effort made to enable them to perform surprising but useless tricks. The same degree of intellectual education is given to all,

without reference to their destination in life; and a poor boy, who is to get his livelihood by weaving or whip-making, is as well instructed in mathematics, and polite literature, as he who is to pursue a literary career. Now there is no reason why a shoe maker, or a basket maker should not be well educated; provided he can learn his profession thoroughly, and find the necessary leisure for study. But if this would be difficult for a seeing person, how much more is it so for a blind one, who to attain any degree of excellence in a trade, must apply himself most intensely and most patiently. The necessity of this is made apparent by the situation of those youths who come out from the Institution at the end of the seven years passed there; they have devoted five hours per day to mechanical employment, but to so many different ones, that they know but little of any. Weaving, whip making, mat, and net making, and spinning, &c. &c. have so effectually divided their attention, that at the end of the year devoted to learning the one, they have almost entirely forgotten that which they acquired the year before.

'It has, however, with all its faults, been productive of great good, and has sent out many pupils who are not only well educated and happy men, but most useful members of society; among others may be cited Mr. Paingeon, the celebrated Professor of Mathematics at the University of Angiers. This interesting young blind man came forward as a candidate in the public controversy for the prizes in Mathematics at Paris;—and after carrying them all off, was named to the professorial chair at Angiers.

'There are in Germany five institutions for the education of the blind, which are carried to different degrees

of perfection : some are under the direction indeed of men of science, but who are cramped in their exertions by various causes ; others, however, are less fortunate.

' The one at Dresden for instance, is under the management of a most excellent lady, but whose only merit is extreme kindness to her interesting charges ; the intellectual education of the pupils is almost entirely disregarded, and they are not taught to read or write : nor am I aware that if she had the disposition, she would have the power, of giving them a better intellectual education.

' The Institution of Berlin, under the direction of the excellent Professor Zeune, is better managed ; but that gentleman cannot carry his views into operation : for instance, he is obliged to employ seeing teachers, because a commissioner wills it, where blind persons in his own opinion might perform the duty infinitely better. How often is it the case that in institutions of various kinds, the practical knowledge and experience of those immediately engaged are overruled by those who look into the subject but once or twice a year, and insist upon directing the whole.

' It may be safely said, that none are so well fitted for teaching the blind, as the blind themselves ; nay ! more, the blind can become most excellent teachers of seeing persons : I have known a blind person manage a class of twelve seeing boys to perfection ; and what was astonishing, he had sufficient moral influence over them to keep them in the greatest order, and prevent them from playing those tricks which boys will do when their master does not see them.

' In the Berlin Institution, as always must be the case in well regulated ones, great attention is paid to in-

structing the blind in music. Who does not know that the blind generally evince greater capacity and inclination for music than seeing persons ; and who can doubt, that the blind man who has acquired his knowledge of music scientifically, may teach it scientifically also, and thus fill a useful sphere in society ?

' The Institution owes its existence indirectly to the illustrious Hauy who passed through that place on his way to St. Petersburg, whither he was summoned by the Autocrat to establish an institution for the education of the blind. This latter, however, though founded and encouraged by an emperor, has fallen into decay ; while the Berlin establishment is continued almost solely by the philanthropic labors and hearty zeal of a few simple citizens.

' In the Berlin Institution, though the pupils are taught to read and write, they have very few printed books ; and the information is given orally. This arises however from the expense of books, and not from any doubt of their utility ; in fact Professor Zeune exerts himself to the utmost to increase his library for the blind.

' He prints with types filled with pin points. The pupils are taught also geography, history, languages, and the mathematical as well as lighter sciences. The time is partly occupied in learning different trades; and on the whole the pupils are as well, if not better qualified to make their way in the world, as those from the Paris Institution. There are four similar institutions in Germany, the best of which seems that of Vienna ; there is also an excellent one at Zurich, which I did not visit.

' The Institution for Indigent Blind in London, is an excellent and most charitable establishment, and productive of great good.

'It is indeed a most delightful sight to see so many blind youth assembled in the work-shops, all neatly clad, and with smiling faces, busily employed at their different trades; and all earning a large part of their livelihood, by their own labor. Instead of the solitary helpless being which we so often see, the blind here presents us the spectacle of an active, industrious and happy youth, who, finding constant occupation in the exercise of his physical powers, and being buoyed by the hope of rendering himself independent of charity, has no time and no inclination for repining at his lot, or for drawing unpleasant comparisons between himself and those about him.

'The Institution in London is intended merely for indigent blind, and their intellectual education is not at all attended to; nor do they occupy themselves about any thing but their trades, with the exception of a little music. There seems to be a doubt in the minds of the person who directs the Institution, of the utility of teaching the youths to read themselves, by means of raised letters; which is singular enough to one accustomed to see the immense usefulness and pleasure afforded to the blind by the use of these books.

'The doubt is apt to be raised however only by good men who question the utility of knowledge in any person, beyond the strict demands of his calling. It is said, that they can always have the assistance of a seeing person to read to them; but besides that the blind cannot always have such a person at their elbow, there is infinitely more pleasure and advantage to be derived from feeling out the letters themselves. They can stop, and go back, or read over a passage a dozen times, reflect upon it as long as they choose, and refer to it on any occasion.

'In mathematical studies particularly, where only a few brief problems and rules are given, books printed with raised letters for the use of the blind are almost indispensably necessary. The advantage, nay! the necessity, of printing the Gospel in raised letters for the use of the blind will be apparent to every thinking Christian. Here is a large number of our fellow creatures within our reach, who might be supplied with the New Testament at small expense, compared with that laid out in sending it among distant heathen.

'It may be said indeed, that the blind can hear the Bible read by their friends, while the heathen cannot; but on the other hand let one consider what a precious treasure a copy of the Testament in raised letters would be to a blind man; he would pore over it, read and reread it, until every word became familiar; and how much greater probability there would be of its producing a good effect than in the hands of those who have a thousand other things to occupy their thoughts. Then too, let one consider the all-important nature of the study; and how jealous one should be of trusting to aught but the cool decision of his own reason.

'In fine, let any pious Christian put the case to himself and say, whether he could be content with having the Scriptures read by another; whether he could abstain from feasting his eyes on God's sacred pages; or refrain from shutting himself up in his closet with his Maker, and his revealed Word.'

'What his eyes are to him, the fingers are to the man deprived of sight, and to the one equally as to the other, is solitary reading and reflection a useful and healthful exercise.'

'Nor to the blind alone would the Scriptures printed

in raised letters be a precious treasure; there are many people who from weakness or temporary derangement of the organs of sight, would be happy to spare their eyes and read with their fingers. The acquisition of this faculty is not at all difficult, any person may in three or four days, enable himself to feel out very easily the raised letters, and read pretty fast.'

'I mentioned in a letter from Europe to your sub-committee a plan which I had conceived of publishing one of the Evangelists in raised characters; without now detailing on all the methods which I would substitute for those hitherto used, I may say, that it is founded upon the only principle which can possibly obviate the immense inconvenience of bulk and expense, viz. that of contraction or stenography; a principle which if acted up to, may, I am convinced, render books for the blind as cheap and as compact as those printed for our use. Whether this system shall substitute tangible for the visible forms of letters, or whether the symbols shall represent sounds, is a secondary question.'

'The Institution at Edinburgh is on the whole the best I saw in Europe, it comes nearer than any other to the attainment of the great object of blind schools, viz. enabling the pupils to support themselves by their own efforts in after life. The establishment is not so showy as that at Paris, nor has it the same means which the latter posseses, and which receives an allowance of 60, 000 francs, or $12,000 per annum from Government: nor has it printed books for their use; still they receive most excellent education and learn some most useful trades. The matress and matmaking business are carried on by the pupils with great skill and success, and many are enabled to earn per diem nearly enough for

their subsistence. They are mostly day scholars, and receive a sum of money in proportion to the work they do.

'The mat and matresses which come out of the Institution, and which are entirely the work of the blind, are certainly better made than any others in the city, and command a higher price in the market. The pupils are occupied also with making baskets, which is a clean and pleasant employment, but not altogether so profitable as the others. They display great ingenuity, and finish very fine and difficult pieces of basket work, but it is a branch in which they have less chance of successful competition with seeing persons. Indeed, one great fault in the systems generally followed in Europe, is the attempt to counterbalance the natural infirmity of the pupil by his ingenuity, his patience, and the excessive nicety of his remaining senses, and to enable him to compete with seeing persons in spite of the advantage they have over him. Now this ought not to be the leading principle; on the contrary, taking it for granted that the seeing person ever must have an immense advantage over the blind, in all handicraft works whatsoever, we should seek out for him such employment as least requires the use of the eyes.

'There are some occupations, such as knitting, weaving, &c. which a blind person may perform nearly as well as a seeing one, but in the present age, the introduction of machinery has superseded in a great measure this kind of labor. In matmaking, the blind man can nearly compete with the seeing one, and therefore should it be taught him, as a means of making himself useful and necessary to others; for after all the efforts of charitable men, this unfortunate class will ever be in a preca-

rious situation, until they can become so useful as to command attention : men are charitable by fits and starts only, but self interest never sleeps ; if the blind can appeal to this, they are sure of being heard.

'Many of the pupils in the Edinburgh institution are, as I observed, day scholars ; that is, they reside with their friends, and come in to work and study every day, and an allowance is made to them proportioned to the work they do, if this is adequate to their support.

'I would observe, that sufficient attention is not paid to the personal demeanor of the blind, either by their parents, or in the public institutions ; they contract disagreeable habits, either in posture, or in movement ; they swing their hands, or work their heads, or reel their bodies ; and seem in this way to occupy those moments of void, which seeing persons pass in listlessly gazing about them. They are apt also to be exceedingly awkward and embarrassed in company, and are often very bashful while very vain ; all this can be corrected by pursuing the same means as used with seeing children, and by accustoming them to society.

'Blind persons can become as well qualified as seeing persons for many employments which are generally thought beyond their powers, they can teach languages, history, geography, mathematics, and many other sciences, perfectly well ; I know not why they should not make the first rate councillors, and think it possible that they might fill the pulpit both ably and usefully.

'I have the pleasure of calling my friend, Monsieur Rodenbach, member of the Belgian Congress : a man who possesses great influence, and who often makes that house ring with original and *naive* speeches ; he is an agreeable orator, and an active business man, and a grace-

ful member of society, and yet has been stone-blind from his childhood.

'I hope that the blind will not have to struggle against unfounded prejudices in our country, yet much do I fear that they will; people are so accustomed to consider the blind as helpless dependents on others, that they will not believe them capable of a high and useful part in society; and when they see one of them, who by uncommon talent, struggles and raises his head a little in the world, in spite of the weight by which society would sink him beneath its surface, they regard him as a passing wonder, and draw no inference in favor of his fellows in misfortune. That great mathematician and philosopher, the illustrious Saunderson, Professor at Cambridge, who deserves a nitch in the temple of fame between Newton and Laplace, drew one of his atheistical arguments from the false opinion of men concerning his powers; he said to a clergyman on his deathbed, "you would fain have me allow the force of your arguments drawn from the wonders of the visible creation; but may it not be, that they only *seem to you wonderful*, for you and other men, have always been wondering how I could accomplish many things, which seem to me perfectly simple.

'But to return to our notice of the different institutions: that at Edinburgh is certainly superior to any in England, and on the whole is so to that of Paris, and were it now in place, I might detail to you many curious and interesting processes for facilitating the education of the blind; the general principle however is to combine intellectual and physical education in such a way, as to qualify the blind for the performance of a useful part in the world; and of so storing the mind with knowledge, that they may have a fund within themselves from which to draw in after life.

'The school at Glasgow, is a more recent one, and is not yet equal to the one in Edinburgh in the advantages of intellectual education which it offers.

'The Liverpool school is remarkable for the very great degree of attention which is paid to the cultivation of the musical talents of the blind, and for their astonishing success in it. An idea may be had of their proficiency from the fact, that the product of their concerts is about $3,500 annually.

'I shall take care to put into the hands of your committee, a more detailed notice of the different establishments which I have visited, and I now close by respectfully submitting to you the conclusions at which I have arrived respecting the general management of your proposed institution.

'Keeping steadily in view the principal object, qualifying the blind to act a useful part in society, one ought to adapt his education to the sphere which the pupil will fill; choosing for every one the occupation in which the least possible necessity exists for the use of the eyes.

'Those who are fortunate enough to be above any pecuniary wants, may occupy themselves entirely with the development of their mental faculties, and the acquisition of all kinds of knowledge; alternating their studies only with such mechanical employments as may be necessary for physical health. I can conceive nothing more delightful than watching and administering to the interlectual wants of a blind person of good parts, as they gradually unfold themselves; and enabling him to wander at will among the fields of fancy and science. Such a person may attain a knowledge of the classics, of ancient and modern languages, and of almost all kinds of science. There is nothing to prevent his becoming an elegant and accom-

plished scholar, and of being qualified to adorn society as well as to be a contented and happy being himself. Think of such a person, and compare him with one sitting in intellectual and physical darkness, and say whether it is not worth while persevering in your undertaking.

'In the education of indigent blind children, or of those whose principal dependence must be on themselves, I should hope that our institution will avoid the extremes into which the French fall on the one hand, and the English on the other. We should depend entirely neither upon physical nor intellectual education, nor should we lay down any general rule to be observed towards all pupils One ought to be even more observant of the bent of a blind boy's mind and the direction of his talent, than he is in the education of seeing children.

'Considering handicraft work to be the occupation in which the blind can compete to less advantage with seeing men than any other, it should be resorted to only in the case of those who manifest no decided talent for anything else. Among twenty blind youth, there will probably be found four who possess a decided musical talent, this then should be assiduously cultivated, music should be their principal study, and they should devote as much time as possible to it.

'If one or two should exhibit a strong inclination for mathamatical studies, or display what may be called the teaching propensity, that is the talent for communicating their knowledge, they should have these powers cultivated; they will surely do better by them in the world, than by making baskets or mats.

'The majority whose talents are but ordinary should be taught some mechanical arts, such as mat, basket or matrass making, and they should make it the chief object

of their education to attain an excellence in them. I would not indeed prevent their learning to read and write, or acquiring a store of intellectual knowledge, but it should not be allowed to impede their way in learning their trade.

'I have often wondered, when in the workshops of the European blind institutions, that they did not have some one reading in the room, while the pupils are at work. I do not believe that it would materially take off their attention from their occupation, and if they did not profit much from the reading, they would do so to a certain degree.

'The pupils who are to learn thoroughly any handicraft work, should not have their attention too much distracted by a multiplicity of occupations; it is true that there are some advantages attending the French method of teaching the children a half a dozen trades, as there are advantages attending almost every bad system: but they by no means outweigh the immense disadvantage of the want of that excellence in one trade which can only be acquired by strict and undivided attention to it.

'As the children destined to a trade should not devote too much of their time to intellectual pursuits, so on the other hand those educated for a higher occupation should not be left unacquainted with some mechanical occupations; they cannot have their mental powers always on the stretch, and as they have the same means of amusement as seeing children, they must be provided with some means of getting the necessary exercise and recreation.

'This may be obviated by a regular attention to work, and by introducing many amusements among them.

'I have often observed with a delighted eye the movement of the blind boys in Paris as they leave the Institu-

tion to go to play; each grasps a cord held by a seeing boy, and follows him rapidly and unhesitatingly through narrow streets, until they enter the immense "Garden of Plants," when quitting the string they run away among the trees, and frolic and play together with all the zest and enjoyment of seeing children. They know every tree and shrub, they career it up one alley and down another, they chase, catch, overthrow and knock each other about, exactly like seeing boys; and to judge by their laughing faces, their wild and unrestrained gestures, and their loud and hearty shouts, they partake equally the delightful excitement of boyish play.

'It appears to me very probable, that the delicacy of health so often the lot of the blind, is owing to the want of proper circulation of the blood; they being much of the time in a state of physical and mental rest.

'We must also adapt our Institution to local circumstances, and in our workshops try to produce those articles best adapted for sale in our market. I have no doubt that the profit of work done in this country by the blind will be infinitely greater than in any other, owing to the higher price of labor; and if one cannot make a blind man approach any nearer to the seeing workman in the amount of his gains, yet, thanks to Providence, the gains of a laboring man with us are not so stinted that he would starve on their being diminished one quarter.'

In submitting to the public this extract of the Report of Dr. Howe, the Trustees are aware, that they are furnishing to cavillers some opportunity of objecting to their infant establishment, on the ground that it is so difficult, even in Europe, to bring them to that degree of perfection which enables them to pay their own way; but besides that the Trustees are unwilling to suppress any evi-

dence in the case, they are convinced that they can steer clear of many of the difficulties, which are to be encountered abroad, and they insist that too much consideration cannot be given to the fact, that they will have fewer obstacles to encounter, and more circumstances to favor them than their predecessors. It cannot be that in these United States there exists a parish which would not give a salary to a blind organist, in preference to a seeing one, provided they were equally well qualified, yet in Europe this is the case. There is not here this fixed prejudice to struggle with, nor yet the immense obstacle of the low price of labor, which in many parts of Europe is in direct ratio to the means absolutely necessary for supporting life.

They have too the light and experience which the others did not, and can profit by their experiments, successful and unsuccessful.

The Trustees are well aware that the advantages of an education cannot be extended to all the blind; and it is in the hope of doing some little good to them, that the attention of their relatives is invited to some remarks on the subject of the domestic education of the blind.

'There is a great error prevalent among those who have friends or relations deprived of their sight; and who imagine that too much kindness, or too much attention cannot be lavished upon them. This is entirely a mistake, and it is quite certain that the greatest obstacle to the education of the blind children who are received into the European institutions, is, that their previous treatment has been such as to prevent the development of their remaining senses.

'Parents absolutely smother the faculties of a blind child in kindnesses; 'the poor dear thing' is blind, say

they, 'it cannot feed itself; it is blind,' 'and cannot dress itself;' and if it ventures across the floor alone, the anxious mother runs and silently removes every obstacle, instead of teaching it a lesson by letting it run against them; and bye and bye, when she is not near the child it may severely hurt itself by falling over something of which it never dreamed.

Then the blind are continually addressed in a strain of pity,—they are reminded every moment of their misfortune, and taught to believe themselves inferior to their fellows, and burdens upon society.

Now nothing can be more injurious than such treatment of blind children, and 'It is all important to disseminate' in the community useful knowledge on the subject of infantile and early education; the mother is the most influential teacher in the world; and if few have correct ideas of their influence, and their duties as teachers of their seeing children, we may say that almost none understand how to act their parts in relation to a blind infant. The compassion of the woman, the affection of the mother, doubly claimed by the misfortune of her infant, grows into fond doting; and as the anxious bird in its eagerness to warm its shivering nestling, may stifle it beneath its feathers, so the mother of the blind child renders it doubly helpless by an excess of solicitude about it; by preventing it from supplying its own wants, or putting forth any of its own energies.*

'It should be strongly impressed upon the mother of the blind child, that she ought to do nothing for it, which it can by any possible pains do for itself; she should allow it to roam about where it will; there is no fear of

*Dr. Howe's Report.

her suffering it to come to any serious harm ; there is no danger that the tendrils of maternal affection should fail to twine about the frail plant, but there is danger that they may encircle it so closely, as to stint forever its growth.

'It would be useless to quote the immense attainments of many blind persons, who have had the advantages of a proper education, or have been endowed with great talents, for such examples would rather tend to discourage many blind than induce them to strive at imitation ; but I may notice what I have repeatedly seen ; the extraordinary difference between blind youth possessing the same natural advantages but differently treated by their parents. I have known young men who could not walk out without a guide, nor occupy themselves in any handicraft work, and who could not even dress or feed themselves ; they were moping, helpless dependents, sitting bowed under the weight of an infirmity, and the consciousness of their inferiority, which was recalled at every movement by the officiousness of their friends ; they were alike useless to themselves, and burdensome to those about them.

'I have known others too without greater natural advantages, who required little more personal attendance than seeing persons, who never were assisted in shaving, or dressing, or feeding themselves, or going about in the neighboring houses ; who could go all over a city ; nay, who could ride on horseback in the country, and mingle with grace and spirit in the waltz, and the other amusements of society. These young men prided themselves in dispensing with the services of those about them as much as possible, and would take quite in high dudgeon

any speech of condolence, or any allusions to their *infirmity.*

'In fact a blind youth should not be reminded of his infirmity, nor taught to consider himself as inferior to his fellows; it is not only useless but discouraging, and his abilities ought to be directed to the development of those of his senses which remain to him. He ought to be made to attend to all his own personal wants and comforts, he ought to be left to puzzle and grope out as many things as possible, and to be left rather in perplexity for an hour, than receive assistance in the accomplishment of any thing which it is morally possible for him to do. And let me say that they can accomplish many things which to an unattentive observer would seem impossible; it would be hard, for instance, to convince many people that a blind man can by the sound of his voice ascertain whether a table or a sofa had been removed from a room which he had much frequented; that he can tell pretty correctly the age and size of a person from hearing him speak; or that he will correctly judge the character of another from the intonation of his voice in a conversation; that he can attain as much excellence in mathematical, geographical, astronomical and other sciences as many seeing persons, and that he can become as good a teacher of music, language, mathematics and other sciences, yet all this, and more, can he do.'

The Trustees have endeavored to base their institution upon broad and scientific principles, and have spared no pains to commence aright. They have procured from France, one of the most accomplished young men who have been educated at the Paris Institution for the Blind; a young man whose acquirements in the classics, in his-

tory, mathematics, and general knowledge, would do credit to any seeing person of his age. He combines also with this, the talent of communicating his knowledge to others.

The Trustees earnestly beg the attention of the public to this fact, which they consider of great importance, viz. the superiority of the blind to seeing persons as teachers of the blind; they agree with Dr. Howe, that no person can so well understand and overcome the difficulties which a blind child has to encounter in learning, as one who had to encounter and overcome them himself. 'I should consider,' says he, 'a school for the blind without blind teachers, as necessarily imperfect.'

The Trustees have also procured from Edinburgh a blind mechanic, who teaches different kinds of work, which may now be seen at the Institution.

They flatter themselves that they have already introduced into their Institution, some important improvements in the method of teaching the blind; as one instance, they would refer to the map at the end of this pamphlet, which is on a plan entirely new, and unknown in Europe. There the maps are made with infinite pains and expense, by glueing strings on to another map, pasted on a board: besides the great expense and necessary clumsiness of which, they do not admit of the divisions and the lettering, which are here introduced. A map of this size would cost at Paris and Edinburgh five dollars; and it would weigh three or four pounds, and not have half as many distinctions as this, which costs less than the one hundredth part of that sum.

The Trustees deem it unnecessary to go into any particular detail of the method of instruction pursued at their Institution; the specimens at the end of this

pamphlet, the raised letters, the musical notes, &c. indicate that the touch is the sense upon which the blind depend, for the acquirement of their knowledge. Their apparatus is as perfect, to say the least, as that of any other institution, and they confidently hope for success, in accomplishing the object proposed by educating the blind.

Fully satisfied as the Trustees were themselves, of the capacity of this neglected class for receiving an education, they were determined to prove it by experiment before making a call upon the public: on the return, therefore, of their Agent from Europe with the blind teachers, they took seven blind persons from different parts of this State, varying in age from six to twenty years. These children taken at random, have now been under instruction nearly five months, and can read correctly with their fingers books printed for their use; they learn arithmetic faster than the generality of seeing children: they acquire more correct and definite notions of geography from their maps than seeing children can, since they are unassisted by the written names; and their progress in music is decidedly great. In regard to manual labor, some of the pupils can already fabricate moccasins and door-mats, which are as strong and durable, and as handsome in appearance, as those made and sold in our shops.

Finally, the Trustees consider that they have accomplished the most difficult part of the task in putting their Institution into actual operation; they have planted the tree—it depends upon a generous public to water it and rear it; and they will only add, that if there be the slightest hesitation in the mind of any one about the propriety of encouraging the charity—if there be any

one who shall entertain the shadow of a doubt of the utility of their Institution, its doors are open, let him come and see for himself.

N. B. The Institution is located at No. 140 Pleasant-street, and may be seen Thursday afternoons, from three to five, by a permit from one of the Trustees, or from the Superintendant, Dr. S. G. Howe.

N. B. The lithograph appended is a *fac simile* of the hand-writing of the blind teacher.